

**UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY**

OU_212409

**UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY**

OUP—556—13-7-71—4,000.

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 824/B85C Accession No. 9750

Author Bridges Robert

Title Collected essays

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

COLLECTED ESSAYS

VOL. II

COLLECTED
ESSAYS PAPERS &c
of
ROBERT BRIDGES

XI

STUDIES IN POETRY

XII

SPRINGS OF HELICON

XIII

WORDSWORTH & KIPLING

XIV

WORD'BOOKS

XV

LETTER ON ENGLISH PROSODY
& NOTE ON NEO-MILTONICS

Oxford University Press
HUMPHREY MILFORD
LONDON

Printed in Great Britain
at the University Press
Oxford
by John Johnson
Printer to the University

PREFACE

IN THESE REPRINTS of Robert Bridges' prose, the Oxford University Press are continuing the use of his phonetic alphabet.

Before this decision was reached, readers were invited to give their votes for or against it. The response was neither large nor decisive; a small majority were, however, in favour of completing the series in phonetic type.

M. M. B.

NOTES
ON THE
PHONETIC ALPHABET

COMPLETE TABLE OF THE VOWELS

accented.	unaccented.	accented or unaccented.	
			as in—
<i>a</i>			<i>father</i>
			<i>hat</i>
	<i>a</i>		<i>ago, general, a</i>
<i>av</i>			<i>avtvmn, authority, a//l.</i>
<i>e\</i>			<i>bed.</i> ²
	a, y		<i>made, dw.</i>
			{ <i>abote.</i> (As a mute, denoting length of preceding vowel.) ³
	<i>e</i>		{ <i>htven.</i> (Vocalizing a liquid.)
			{ <i>zhe.</i> (Before a consonant.)
<i>ill</i>	<i>?</i>		<i>green recall the</i> (Before a vowel.)
	<i>i</i>		<i>It.</i>
			<i>mtiyit, b[.</i>
	<i>i</i>		<i>hot.</i>
	<i>o</i>		<i>open.</i>
	<i>o</i>		<i>full.</i>
<i><v\</i>	<i>u</i>		<i>moon.</i>
			<i>mite.</i>
	<i>v</i>		<i>bvt.</i>
	<i>ov</i>		<i>hot/.</i>
			<i>lyricj pity.</i>

NOTES ON THE VOWELS

I. The form of this symbol was chosen to picture the sound that it stands for; viz. an imperfect *a*—one whose characteristic sound is blurred through being unaccented.

To read *paradox* and *Asia*, for example, may serve to remind a deliberate, careful speaker not to say *paradox. Asia*.

2. Some writers may choose to use £, in preference to , for certain syllables which carry a secondary accent only; thus, the last syllable in *tendernes*, *lihtheartidnes*:—

and for past participles, bearing a secondary accent, as *comforted*, *distributed*:—

also for certain words with the prefix Σ*x*, *in*, &c. — if pronounced *EX* rather than Σ*x*, even when the vowel is unaccented: viz. *ixampt expire*. Robert Bridges would have advocated this pronunciation and spelling; and in such words as the above, where the second vowel is undoubtedly accented, the reader would not be misled. A few other exceptions to accentuation of Σ are *index*, *content* &c.

3. The use of *e*, as a mute, sometimes to soften *c*, but chiefly to distinguish long from short final syllables, is explained in Prose V

Further it is permitted to write mute *e* at the end of certain monosyllables, which, by virtue of their sense, carry weight, even if their vowel be short by nature: thus *Iove*, and occasionally *done gone*, &c. And we write *some* or *som*, according to sentence stress.

4. followed by *e*, as in *sincire*, *ziuse*, is accented, *iw* is accented as *infew*, *biwtiful*, and *in* as in *rial*, *dear*, &c.

For those who have not seen No. V, it should be explained that this symbol, " , stands for *i*, and ?? for *i* : , in the I. P. A. alphabet. It was the intention of the designer (R.B.) to approximate the shape to some form of *i*, which would in all probability be eventually substituted.

We write *book*, *look*, &c in order to change as little as possible the appearance of these common words. And, for the same reason, *trufhfrut*, &c , instead of *ftrooth*, *froot*: this cannot mislead as *y* (cons.) never occurs after *r* before *oo*.

Capitals are not dealt with. Proper names are unchanged and quotations given in the original spelling.

RULES

FOR THE EFFECT OF ON PRECEDING VOWELS

RULE 1

In standard English,

The vowels, *a*, *æ*, *o*, *u*, *oo*, and the digraph *av* (except in *cowry*) are followed by the sound of *e*, before *r*. In some words this sound is represented by the symbol *e* written before the *r* as in *aerate*, or after the *r* as in *fare*, *fire*, *more*, *pure* but often its presence is indicated by no symbol as in *Mary*, *steer*, *poor*.

RULE 2

In an orthographically closed syllable ending in *r*, or *r* followed by another consonant—

or has the sound of *aur(a/r)* *nor*, *fort*.

vr „ „ *err* *for*, *hort*.

ir „ „ *err* *stir*, *squirt*.

er „ „ *err* *her*, *herd*, *confer*.¹

Inflected and derived forms remain unaltered: thus, *stirrinforry*.

¹ *er* is always accented, whereas *err* is always unaccented.

RULE

FOR THE EFFECT OF *w*, *wh*, and *qu* ON THE
FOLLOWING *a*.

In standard English,

a following *w*, *wh*, and *qu* has the sound of *o*: thus—*was*, *what*, *quarrel*.

[Except before *ok*, *g*, *ng*, and *x*; as *whack*, *wag*, *wangle*, *wax*.]

THE CONSONANTS

The following are unchanged:

bdfhjklmnpqrvwxyz.

c is soft before $\Sigma e ? ? ? i \S y$.

c is hard before all other vowels and diphthongs.

g is always soft, thus *gem*, *manag*.

g „ hard, „ *go*, *get*.

s has four forms:

s as in *soft* (unvoiced) *s* as in *was* (voiced)

s „ *sugar* „ *S* „ *measure* „

LIGATURES

n,, as in *sing* *sh* as in *ship*

th „ *thin* (unvoiced) *si* = *fh* „ *Asia*

zh „ *the* (voiced) *ci* = *sh* „ *social*

wh „ *what* *ti* = *sh* „ *notion*

ch „ *chin*

When *ch* or *Wh*, unligatured, are used at the beginning of a word, one of the letters is mute: thus, *Christian*, where *h* is mute; *whoo*, where *w* is mute.

Note. Phonetically, 5 symbols are unnecessary for the sound *sh* (*f*), but we retain all of them in use at present to avoid the otherwise unfamiliar appearance of words.

Several mute consonants are retained, thus: *twoo*, *answer*; *know*, *kn§fe*; *half*, *thawht*. Also *of* is always written thus, and not *ov*. But these are matters for personal choice.

XI

STUDIES IN POETRY

FIRST PRINTED

Times Literary Supplement

21 Nov. 1907

XI

STUDIES IN POETRY

WITH growin, popularity of English pottry as a svbjct for amnter study and middlcclss cvltur, such essays as these¹ b§ Mr. stopford Brooke svppfy a practical mid; and, regardity his volum as a representativ text' book in zhe voge of literary criticism, wvn mty perhaps be permitted tu observe that some of he rots are deepenin,, and that zher appears a tendency tu svpli he want of a true method b§ expatiating on dovtful topics and capri' civs notions, and tu indvlge in vage metafor and semi' poetic language. For instance, because dhe pons treeted of in zhis volytm—namely, Blake, Scott, Shelley, and Keats—wer all living at he beginninof he last century, we are isorted intu he inevitable rot of he influence of zhe French Revolution; and he paramount question concerning hem if howzhey wer severally affectid b§ he revolutionary ideafs wherypon it if duly expleind zhat Blake began tu write before he Revolution and antici' pated it; hat of Scott and shelley, whoo wer more ixactly its contemporarief, the former abhor 'd and the

¹ *Studies in Poetry*. By Stopford A. Brooke. (Duckworth. 6s. net.)

STUDIES IN POETRY

latter espovs'd its doctrins; while tu Keats, whoo came after, and 'had a tender love of being beautifu^l like the lilies', they wer matterf of absolute indifference, since 'when the wave of the Revolution ebbed, the ship of imagination was stranded on the shore of apathy

Agein, a,ll these for pods hav tu be svbsomd and differensiated vnder the hed of the naturalistic scool—zhatt if, of die writers whoo made a direct return tu netur in reaction from zhe artifeialitief of zhe French scool of the eihteenfh century. Mr. stopford Brooke here readvocates his old belief zhat the love of netur, as Shown inpoetry b§ description of external objects, was a Celtic tradition bravht tu 'London in Jamie Thomson'S pouchet. Bvt since it wer monstrvs tu der§ve the Songs of innocence from Thomson 's Seasons, it if Shown zhat Blake's naturalism was rather a sypernaturalism, 'not so much the love of outward nature as of the spiri tual life of which nature was but the sensible form; and this if true inoff, but the greiter includes the less. Scott, whoo, as if Shown, combind zhe Iove ofnatur with romantic placelore and historic association, m§ht hav biin dresst intu l§ne; bvt the avthor if here svmhat vn' genervs tu his own fhiitory, havin a/lredy told us zhat Scott, 'like the rest of the world of his time, had gained

STUDIES IN POETRY

from the ideas which preceded the French Revolution the love of wild and solitary nature. . . . It was everywhere afloat'. So it would seem, after "all, that the English school of poetry might have played upon 'the great harp of nature and man, the strings of which are made of the fibres of the human heart, and the sounding wood of which is nature herself', just as well without Thomson and his; Celts.

You pass from the genesis of ideas. There is in this book a good deal concerning the genesis of poems. The poetic rapture is twice compared to Moses striking the rock; and, in speaking of Shelley's; ode to the West Wind, our author says; that he 'can well imagine the first lines leaping from his lips in a moment—thought, emotion, metre, movement—all rushing together into a self-creation'. But he is more precise about lyrics and songs; 'when a lyric rises into form in a great poet, it is always in fire that it rises.' Again, the best songs are written not only when the poet is young, but when the nation round him is also young! Here the phenomenal Blake has; once more to be mentioned, for 'the age in which he lived was outworn; but it is; explained that 'he felt that impulse of the Revolution before it came'. This sum; to be working the Revolution a little too hard. THE uncertainty of the method is; well exposed when our author

STUDIES IN POETRY

catchis Ruskin caperin on zhis boggy ground. 'The prevailing temper of Scott's poetry is sadness', he writes; 'Ruskin says he was sad, and alleges that the age was sad, and Scott, representing it, became sad.' But Mr. Stopford Brooke wil hav none of zhis; fa seys zhat 'the age was not at all sad', and zhat zhe general sadms of Scott's poetry was due tu 'his apartness from the fresh movements of his age. A man cannot write poetry away from the main drift of his time without feeling his isolation, and the more sympathy he possesses the more he feels his isolation to be sorrowful'. A critic wich a truer method wudprobably sey sumthin of zhis sort—namely, zhat Scott was not sad, and zhat zhe lovly tendernis of his ehgiac note in landscap isfriiquent because hefovnd zhat fa cud iisily produce it, l§ke my synset'peinter's man' nerism; but zhis miht be stron meet for a girls' class in an extension lecture, The ethical criticism of art is no rod; it if nothin but pitfavlls. Carlyle, in his Essey on Burns, iiven Carlyle, because of his wvn§ed ethical outlook, never came neer ike mark. Stevenson, writin on zhe same subject, respectfully preises Carlyle's preise of Burns, but immudiatly thrvsts it all as'yde and seys zhe riht thin) in plein terms. Carlyle had apologetically askt, 'ls it strange that his poems are imperfect?' and

STUDIES IN POETRY

then sect, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man that he interests and affects us. But Stevenson, 'There was never a man of letters with more absolute command of his means; and we may say of him, without excess, that his style was his slave. . . . it was by his style and not by his matter that he affected Wordsworth and the world. . . . if Burns helped to change the course of literary history, it was by his frank, direct, and masterly utterance, and not by his choice of subjects'.

wicha sufficient dose of salt Mr. stopford Brooke's volume my bepreis'd; indiid, ifhe follow'd riht methods he cud only doo well; for he if an enthusiastic lover of poietry, wizlt afine taste and true instincts, tu which his book barf witnes hru'aut—wvn miht sey without ix' ception if hi had not wisht tu siim tu preife shelley's socialistic rimes. His apprttciation of Blake if worthy and very welcom, and zht extracts from him are con' vincinly well thosen. His feifhful devotion tu zhe lovable Scott if genuin and infectivs, and he has dun good service bi insistin on zhe real bewty of zhe best passages in Scott's narrativ poims. His analysis of these are concise and useful; and zho' ht expleinf zhat he feels a scruple in analisin zhe bewtiful, yet ht if quite at his best in zhatt kind of work. He expleinf his attitude in

STUDIES IN POETRY

these words: 'when it [criticism] seeks to find out faults, I never think it worth much, hut if it is dore at all, it ought to be done well, and above all in a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we should also be tempted to write.' It wud hav been dilihtful if Aristotle had sed zhis when lectnrin on Homer. Mr. Stopford Brooke's analysis ofshelley's ode to the west wind thud be very useful tu students; but fa shows an asovndin simplicity in sypposin zhat zhe ilaborut con'strvction which he discovers was not fully present in the mind ofzhepoit. He calls it an 'unconscious logic, and so in anvzher place speaks of'the unpremeditated excel'lence of the contrasts' in The Eve of St. Agnes, and agzin ofthe 'exquisite and unconscious skill' in Isabella. He points aut very well zhat 'there is a logic of emotion as well as of thought'. This if a true and useful remark, and m\$ht hav been expanded bi showin)what svm of the laws. of zhis logic are; bvt whis syppose zhat when zhe artist ixhibits it best, he if not aware of it, fillin and attendin The psichology of what if call'd inspiration if difficult—hav far zhe element zhat if due tu 'subconsciousness' my in any given case hav been consivlsy or vnconsivlsy model'd or reform'd; and in the mutual workins of the consivs and svhconsivs, syppofin zhat their fiilds cud be

STUDIES IN POETRY

separated, zhe varptief of interaction must fa infinit. Moreover zhe most automatic conception of a work of art has tu pass thru'solona passag of consivs manipyila' tion before it is fully transfer d tu its ixpresion in eny maturial zhat zhe artist in zhis process mvst as an expert fa suppos'd tu hav been consivs of whatever excellence a critic mey discvver.

Won whole essey if divoted tu shelley's Epipsychi' dion, and meny wil fa glad of zhe assistance, zho' zhey must fa content tu find that svme of zhe personal allusionf are still vnidentifid. An account of shelley'f impersonation of zhe 'ideal Beauty to which he aspired to unite himself if patiently workt out, hav 'he created an Epipsychidion—"a soul out of his sour—a heightened, externalized personality of himself, conceived as perfect; an ideal image of his own being; different in sex; his corny plement; originally part of him, now separated from him; after whom he pursued; whom he felt in all that was calm and sublime and lovely in knowledge, in nature, and in woman; and to absolute union with whom he passion' ately aspired'; and hav hi c&Wd it Emily for fthru wuks. Shelley if a Ivvable crutyir, bvt can only fa so tu zhose whoo recognize zhat hi was not altogezher responsible for all his condvct. Any vzher kind of apology condemns him.

STUDIES IN POETRY

The last essay, on Keats, handles perhaps the most difficult subject the author has undertaken to interpret that poet's mind and the growth of his ideas. There is so much hidden meaning in Keats's poems, and it is so difficult to extract, that we are grateful for my contribution?; and Mr. Stopford Brooke appears to have made some. In the main his account will be recognized as truthful, but not all his distinctions are convincing. There is, however, much that is good, and the sympathy with which he writes of the different poems is illuminating. Thus he speaks well of the 'subtle, separate, scented atmosphere of the Isabella,' which enters into every line of the poem, and isolates into its special air the imagination of every reader'. And of The Eve of St. Agnes, 'the story has the immense merit of improbability'; and, again, 'The poem is like a crystal sphere in which changing images arise and pass away, incessantly shifting; and it is surrounded by an aura of its own that isolates it in poetry, indeed, this is a characteristic of all the best poems of Keats! He writes of Lamia as if he thoroughly understood that poem; but if he did, it is tantamount to saying that his interpretation should be so condensed; it runs thus:—"The ancient serpent superstition which came from the Aryan home is linked to the love of woman, to the

STUDIES IN POETRY

decay of sensuous joy, to the misery of fate. The reason of the world is against the isolation sensuous passion creates; and its beauty challenges doom, when science concentrates this reason of the world, without pity, on such beauty, it withers away. Those are the thoughts of it.' This is obscure, and there is some of the same sort of obscurity, occasionally grammatical, in his interpretation of Hyperion. A passage which promises to make a good point reads as follows:—'Keats, in the words of Apollo, there describes the passion for knowledge of all human history which has seized on him, and of which he desires to sing; but chiefly for knowledge of what men have done and suffered, created and destroyed, aspired to and failed in. He is torn and rent by the passion of it.' This sort of writing is provoking, and may justify a reviewer who shrinks from the labour of disentangling the truth and originality from this study, which is the result of patient work, though the author delivers his opinion too lightly as to what Keats had and would have done. But the book itself is not large enough for the subjects brooded in it; and its limits must be remembered, lest in speaking of its imperfections we forget to be grateful to the writer for all that he has given us.

XII

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

FIRST PRINTED

Times Literary Supplement

1 April 1909

XII

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

N E A R L Y half a century has passed since Matthew Arnold broke the Aristotelian tradition of the chair of Poetry at Oxford, and by a course of memorable lectures set a new model to his successors, more congenial to them and to their audiences, but becoming more and more difficult and exacting as, with the growth of Oxford, a company of hearers has assembled with wider tastes and attainments than could easily be matched elsewhere; indeed, whether by no conceivable combination of excellences which could be in excess of their demand. Arnold at once stroke magically transformed a pedantic and scholastic exercise into a living expression of modern culture; but in so doing himself he did not consider those who might follow him. Among them all no one has ever seemed to combine the qualifications more conspicuously than Mr. Mackail; he is deservedly a favourite, and the University is to be congratulated on its professor. He has now published the lectures of the last two years of his professoriate in a volume the title of which, *The Springs of Helicon*,¹ if

¹ *The Springs of Helicon. A Study in the Progress of English Poetry from Chaucer to Milton.* By J. W. Mackail. (Longmans. 4s. 6d. net.)

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

a happy hit, exactly in die qht kee. it if borrow'd from Gray'? ode, and he meens it zhat he wil trace the mazy rills of English poitry tu their Heliconian sorce.

Tor this porpos hetakes Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton as the thru theefthannels, and discosses them severally in their relation tu three greit upoks of European reneis'sance, and agein in dieir rdation tu dhe man cvrrent of English poetical tradition, and agein as original pons, in this last department he silks critically tu distinguish the best work of iich, and estimates it with respect tu the masterpiicis of the world; he also draws avt their personal characteristics intu sume sort of portrat; and all this if done, within the limits zhat his Short lectyirs allow, wich thatt abvndant lernirn and attractiv stile which he has tavht vs tu look for in hif work. it if not a task for a revewer tu follow in diital; and the skeme of it tuches poetry on so meny sides zhat won cannot ixpect zhe inqsvjvdgments of which he is so prodigal t u fi t tugezher very closely, or tu be quite feir svbjects for separat criticism. Taken tugezher, haeuver, zhey constiute a body of opinion on which the value of the book must vltimaty rest, and in svbmittin a few of his ivdgments tu discvsion we make no apology for thoosin some which siim most piculiar and open tu objection.

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

Tu begin wich chaucer. of Troilus and Creseide we heren reed zhat 'it is a consummate masterpiece, one of the few large perfect things in our literature. . . . The figures breathe and live; this is true not only of the two principal characters, but of all . . . nothing in modern creative work is more subtly delicate in its psychology' This jvdgment wil scarcely mat wich vnqualif§'d assent. Admittiri) tu zhe full zhe delicat poetic bewty of the last book, of uthidh Mr. Mackail sympathetically seys zhat he can hardly trust himself tu speak, an objector wil orge zhat zhe reesson which the pom if so little known if because so few reeders hav bun able tu wade thru the txtensiv pandarics of the erlier books; and if won thud dutifully hav accomplisht zhis, yet whatever sympathy he mey hav for Troilus at zhe end, he feels zhat hi if wiipin for an ass, and zhatt too in spite of eny covnter'afurance in zhe narrativ. Then, as for creseide, wh§le Mr. Mackail wonderf at chaucer s' 'sweet grave pity' for her, and seys zhat wvn has tu tvrn tu Dante for its parallel, it wud appear tu most ruders zhat zhis pity if merely common jvstice, for zhe poor girl has been grossly wrond; nor can we redily §deal§ze a passion zhat has bun so managd and handled. Tu cvm vpon a free translation of Per correr miglior aqua at zhe beginnin

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

of the second book (as introduction to the more successful stage of pandarism) makes won smile at the amazing impudence of chancer's methods. Mr. Mackail, who goes fully into the matter, tell; vs that chaucer 're models the story most often by thinking intensely over it.' But if it is true of his Creseide that 'in the full sense without reservation she is like one of Shakespeare's women', then Surely it is essential that she should be a maid; whereas chaucer inconsiderately blunders there, not only making her a widow, but recklessly adding that she may have had Children for all he knew or cared. Again, chaucer's nonchalance is fairly contrasted with the 'more laborious art' of other poets. But, to take one example only, what could be more laborious than to translate 120 lines of a Latin treatise on free-will into English stanza to make a passionate speedier Troilus when he hears that Creseide is to leave Troy? Or is this a recipe for making Shakespearian character? Moreover, in the middle of this soliloquy, often he is disputing with himself, he parenthetically, in chaucer's well-known manner, apologizes for boring an imaginary audience, and promises not to detain them much longer. Possibly Mr. Mackail's pre-Raphaelite leanings make him kindly disposed towards this sort of imperfection; but he is

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

*Usually genervs tuward; whatever fa i; ingagd on.
This indulgence overflow; tu zhe twoo stanza; quoted
from Boccaccio on p. 29, which fa asures us are of
'extreme beauty', what doo words man? After the
skilful disposition of som sweet Italian names which
makes the first stanza we come tu these words—*

e molte

Di lui cognate e parenti raccolte.
ciascuna a suo potere il confortava,
E tale il domandava che sentia.

Uarmonivs rill i; perhaps not a bad name for zhis.

*In spite of zhese objection;, Mr. Mackail's; general
exposition ofchaucer leeves nvthin tu be desird, if only
fa wud not, in the interests of h\$h poetry, scruple tu
admit, what fa so well sees, zhat chaucer; greit svccess
ley in zhe humanity of hi; sketdhi; from life, and zhat hi;
hiher fights wer mostly zher translation;, or tasks
from ufliidi fa gladly iscapt. Hi; most delicat tuthes,
too, are generally bravd humanitie;, a;, for instance (we
are expaiiatity nau, not critiqzin), when Creseide in'
sists that her theef sorrow in Ieevin Troy is zhe zhavht
of zhe distress zhat it wil cav;e tu Troilus. This i; not
a personal treit, but generic; most truthful, but in ike*

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

natyir of all affectionat wimin. The effect effect, too, which if obteind b§ Troilus and pandarus Watchin for Creseide'f return is of the bravdest and most universal t§pe. its delicacy dæx not l§e at all in its character§zb tion of zhose twoo men, bvt in zhe transmutin tendernis of chancer's human tuch. Mr. Mackail wud drive as back from zhe Canterbury Tales tu 'the exquisite narratives in the Legend of Good Women'..

We next come tu Spenser. He if treeted in a more personal manner, and zhe appreciation is comphte. 'His unmatched fluency of melody . . . his lavish intricate beauty . . . his immense poetic flexibility . . . amazing profusion and variety in style as well as in language. . . He is the most inexhaustible and various of all the English poets', yet he 'was not in the first order of poets . . . had an almost complete absence of humour... a want of touch between life and art . . . utter absence of the Greek quality, and of the dramatic and narrative gift'; and in sp[te of zhis last he if likend tu Livy, in a com' parison zhat awokenf some curiosity. Svddenly (on p. 102) we come vpon zhis:—If Nicholas Bottom did not marry till middle life, his son might very well have handled a pike at Naseby'; and before we hav recover d from the effort of rijectin zhis Bottomles hipofhisis we

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

rud of zhi Epithalamion zhat for' certain qualities it easily takts the first place among all English odes'. And this wil startle a//l ruderf whoo happen, as we did, tu take for' tu meen by virtue of, and not in respect of—zhatt if, not as jvstification but as qualification of the preise; but iiven wer its poetical content more imaginativ, liven zhen it if davtful whezher it wud conker zhe fastidium which if cavsd b§ its vndyie lenth; vnfitted zhatt if tu zlie rilation of zhe sptiker wizh his subject. An averag bridegrcom discorsin of his own happinis miht be expected tu be zhvs prolix, but zhe realism if vncall'dfor in his ode.

The third section of zhe hook if divotid tu Milton, and if bas'd on an apprntiativ caracter sketch of zhe poit, exicyitid not wizhavl such a svccessful rhetoric as an Oxford aidience mvst hav injoy'd. The first half of zhe first dhapter if afyne contribution tu Miltonic literature. The motiv of pride, which Mr. Mackail assps tu Milton tu explein his printin all his worser piices, if well imagind and persuasivly put, andfalls in wizh the rest of his pictur, iiven zho' we mey not accept zhi account as complete and f§nal. His remarks are generally just, and his illvstrations illuminatin, yet he appears svmtimes tu miss or confuse zhe simple aspect of zhe

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

matter. As when he insists that it is the sustained and all but faultless perfection of the execution ... the flawless excellence of the workmanship' which distinguishes Paradise Lost, the truth if misst. He thus has seen the style of the execution; and that, as the analogy of painting would illustrate, is in different from what is expressed in his phrases, however intended. So the point of Milton's isolation—which is pictured by an image, quoted from some poet, whose description does not identify him thus, of a lonely eagle on a mountain-top before dawn—was made at too great a sacrifice, in which droivity Milton from all relation, it denies the existence of anything that we should be interested to know; and it leads the lecturer to say that 'he gave no impulse to letters, except that impulse received by all true artists when they see and recognize consummate art. Mr. Mackail if, of course, thinking only of the eighteenth century: we had almost forgotten it, and were thinking how Milton connects Shakespeare with Keats, has he finally modernized and methodized Chaucer; metrical invention; has he has been the strongest and most enduring of all influences on the subsequent progress of English poetry.

The professor if himself a poet; and we fancy'd that

THE SPRINGS OF HELICON

we had svt\$mes detected him with both feet off zhe ground, in zhe last lectur zher is actual aviation. We interpret zhe vltimbnt section tu meen that hewil return tu erth in order tu discuss Dryden, Pope, and vzherf before speekin of more hevenly thins. whatever his thoice me be, we can trust him t u s t i f § it in his performance.

XIII
WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

FIRST PRINTED
Times Literary Supplement
2g February 1912

XIII

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

No poet ever took himself more sarivlsly than did William Wordsworth; havever wide hi; avtlook, he livd as a sectary in a clo;d system, and imagind that what' ever he happen d tu think wa; of primary importance. He compare; hi; twoo dhuf poim;, The Prelude and The Excursion, tu die nave and quire of a Gothic caphiidral, and hi; m'ynor pom; tu the thantries and thapel; that border the\$les. The feelings with which as christians, we contemplate a mixed congregation rising or kneeling before their common Maker' (thvs hi; frend Coleridge explen;)^fMr. Wordsworth would have us entertain at all times as men, and as readers.' He wud probably hav (havht a complete concordance tu hi; wvks inevitable and necissary, so we mey congratulate hi; hade on the sort of honorary degree diat die con* cordance Soc\$ety ha; nou conferd vpon him. A;for dieir very useful hook; dhe most remarkable fhin about it is the editorial statement that dhe whole task of prepar in the copy was accomplishtin seven mvnths. Until

A Concordance to the poems of William Wordsworth. Edited for the Concordance Society by Lane Cooper. (Smith, Elder. 425.)

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

concordances shall be made by masheenery, this must be consider'd a; good time. But it follows that the work is not a filological but only an alphabetical index of words 'Honeybees', for instance, and 'Saint Bees' are under the same head, and St. Bees' if also under 'saint,' while 'Bees', as the genitive plural of 'bee', has a separate head by virtue of its apostrophe. No intelligence is needed to make a concordance of this kind, and unless it is made it must have, we reckon, about for the bulk of the original work. we cannot be inflexible over such a performance. Moreover, Wordsworth would not stand very high in a list of English authors ranked according to the importance of their vocabularies. But a reasonably made dictionary of the language of any great writer would require, both in the selection of words and in the analysis of their meanings, a great deal of expert learning and literary intelligence; and experts have neither the leisure nor the inclination for such unproductive toil.

Fate having placed on our shelves alongside of this book a Kipling dictionary,¹ we will not divorce them. There can hardly be two authors more different than

A Dictionary of the Characters and Scenes in the Stories and poems of Rudyard Kipling, 1886-1911. By W. Arthur Young. (Routledge. 8s. 6d.)

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

Wordsworth and Mr. Kipling, but zheir thance jvxta position svuggests a comparison which wud not vzherwife hav arisen; and, zho' the feet of sittirn at wonce on zthese twoo widely separated stoolf if impossible, we can at lust spin a fhred between zhem. The (hred is zhis. Wordsworth in his famos preface tu zhe Lyrical Ballads contended zhat poetic diction thud be token from rvstic spttdh. Coleridge (hreM zhatt matter out wizh svme perspicacity, bvt managed, af it wud sam, tu strike awa from zhe real issue. We shud sty zhat zhe man actual significance of -Axe debate was zhat poetic diction shud be living. The lamented Mr. Synge, in his preface tu The Playboy of the Western World, restates dhe thesis in his own wey, and writes, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old wicklown house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servangirls in the kitchen! it if neassnry, he contends, for a poet artist tu hav a rich, copivs, live languag, 'whereas modern poetry is either absolutely removed from real life, like Mallarme, or deals with the realities of life in the joyless, pallid words of lbsen or zola'. New, if we regard Kipling's erly work, zher seems tu be a consensvs amon zthese fhree original writers; for in seekin tu

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

escape from convention} zhey allflb tu the idioms and actual converse of common folk. And zhis if only anvzher aspect of the filclogical dictom zhat a decyity speech is capable of dialectic rgeneration. The resvlt of Mr. Synges'f experiment was a very welcom freftines and a gracivs bewty of motion, which his geenivs made zhe best of; but zhe tharm of it soon palls,, and its strangenes becomes itself a mannerifm more manner d zhan zhatt which it syplanted. The greiter the detight which we fed in such a novelty zhe sooner wil it pass.

The st\$le my be zhe man, but we wish here tu dissociate zhe twoo and speek only of die st\$le; and we wud say zhat in eech of zhese three wr\$ters the man motiv was tu get at svmfhinfreth. it if true in a,ll art that when a greit master appears he so exavsts the mateerial at hif dis' posal as tu make it impossible for any succeedin artist tu be original, vnless he can \$ther find new mateerial or invent svm new method of handlin zhe old. in peintity and music zhis if almost demonstrable tu the vnintiiated; in poetry the lav my not be so strict, but it still holds; and eny wvn my see zhat seerivs rime if new exavsted in English verse, or zhat Milton 's blank verse practically ended as an original form wich Milton. Ther are abvndant sins zhat English syllabic verse has lon been in

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

*the stage of artistic exhaustion of form Mdh follows
 greit artisac adieevement Nov a? far a? regard? die
 vzrse'form Wordsworth was apparently vnconsivs of
 zhis predicament it never occvrd tu him zhat fa wa?
 wvrkity with blvnted tool?. Hi? \$dea was tu purify the
 diction and revivify English poetry b\$ puttin a new
 content intu the old verseform; and twoo reeson? my
 be given for this conservati?m. First, that in his time
 an artificial sccol of poetry had szpawted itself off from
 zhe older tradition, so zhat eny retrvrn tu the older stile
 appeared tu be a fre/hnes; and, secondly, he was a part
 of zhatt vnaccavntoble flvd of inspiration which in
 Keats and Shelley and in a few of Coleridge's lyrics
 transcended in some v\$tal qualities ufwhatever had been
 done before, and actually wravht miracles of original
 bewty within the old form?; but these bond'breikity
 efforts, we /hud sy, more zhan completed zhe exavstion,
 wh\$le dhe teedivs quality of mvch of their work shows
 vnder what hamperin condition? the geenivs of die?e
 poets atteind excellence. Keats speaks very plainly; he
 sty?, for instance, that he relinquisht his Hyperion
 becau?e he cud not get away from Milton; and Mr. Synge,
 tho he wrote but little verse, seem? tu hav been fully
 consivs of the poetic situation; indeed, he thavht it so*

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

desperat af tu question whezher 'before verse can be human again it must not learn to be brutal'.

Followin zhis general line, let vs examin Mr. Kipling's method and its refylts; bvt tu avoid misvnderstanding it wil be well at the outset tu determin zhe limitation of ovr inquiry. Mr. Kipling's gnniv is very varyd, and zho' he haf written mvfli verse he ha? wvn hi? reputation dheefly b§ his prose talef. New we shall concern ovrself only wizh his verse, and only with the stile and diction of zhatt. wizh Mr. Kipling, then, nvhin in diction if common or vncleen; nor can we draw eny strict line tu separate zhe diction of such poems as The Barrack-room Ballads, ufhidh are professedly and wholly in zhe low dialect of zhe car acters, from zhofe vdier poemf ufhere it if not so prominent nor so evidently in place. A good meny poemf, it if true, are entirely free from it; but zhese radier show the avfhorf liberty tu take vp wizh vkatever manner he my thoose; and their conventionalities of rime and diction, from which not eeven the obsolete if rejected, are not tu be reckon' d amvn his inventions. Nov as veehiclefor zhiskind of diction (which need not be more needy describ'd) he chooses the Elizabee(han ballad stanza, die nvrseriy rime, die popular son), and uftiatever vzher accentual lilt he my

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

divfae of a similar caracter, and wizh zhtfe material risorcif (of diction and mutre) hi wil trut almost eny svbjct. As nn example tu txhibit zlie rifvlt we wil take The Looking Glass, in Rewards and Fairies. In zhis masterly poim zhe motiv if hiroic and almost tragic. Greit Quttn Bess if portryd wizli zhe van wuman'f vanity and zhe tyrant's bad consience, and wich a vast pride, sufficient tu dravn zhem both; and the pictur if done wich such force zhat meny reeders wil hav the for stanzas b§ hart when they hav red them twice. Nov observe the diction; the first line rons thus:—

*The Queen was in her chamber, and she was
middling old.*

This if of corse fovnded on

*The Queen was in her parlour eating bread and
honey,*

and the kii of the motion if zhvs diliberatly pitcht at the level of the nonsensical nursery rime. observe, too, zhe ixpresion 'middling old' This sets die Queen down amon the homeliest of her subjects; bvt in so dooin) it my humanize and provoke common sympathy. Later on Lord Leicester's ghost comes 'scratching and singing at the dore, which degrades the ghost; and yet, in spite of

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

those thins, the whole has an irresistible force, so zhat ovr dislike of the incongruities, if we fid eny, if over paver d; and zhis force, zho' it mey not be due tu zhe apparent obstacles, my sum zhe greither for its victory over them. That 'was' (= woz) is rim'd in the refrein wich 'lass' if a convention no davt congtnial tu the nvrsery rime, and wt only mention it btcavfe it if not vtherwise reconcilable wizh Mr. Kipling 's method, which at its best refuses the foolish inversions and bad rimes that lower the standard of so meny of Words' worth's scohstic stanzas, because they are conventions of another scool, retein'd for obvivs convenience—mere resorces of imperfect execution, (criticism ofthispoem cannot omit notice of the frase 'her sins were on her head', which must be reckon as a slip in artistic accomplishment, because, since the Queen if lookin at herself in the mirror, won if too consivs of her actual hed tu escape visualizin) at wonce some sort of bundle on the top of it. This b§ the way.)

Nov svppose zhat we had never herd zhe rime of the Queen and her bred and hvny, and did not know English well inufftu vnderstand zhe true valuef of middling' and 'scratching, wud die poem affect vs less or more paverfully zhan it dvef wich this knoledge what wud it

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

*be without the queer quality that it actually has Or
agein, if our plesor attendant on our admiration racher
zhan our admiration on our plesor? it if iisier tu ask
svch questions zhan tu answer zhem; we my be content
wich the iurer ground zhat Kipling if Kipling, and that
wichovtKipling wei shud never hav had the pom; and we
are glad tu hav got it. Bvt this almost impties that the
writer must hav an idiosyncrasy alid tu his st\$le. Hire
if anvcher example, in die very hwtijul story ofThe
Brushwood Boy every wvn wil rimember zhat die diss
cvvery if made b\$ the divice of the girl bein overherd
sini the son in Mdh flu narrates her Itfeloty drum,
it if essential tu the story that the son) shud be pathetic
and worthy. she was a musician, and had compos'd
both the music and the words. Nov won line in her
refrein (or did her criator write it for her?) if zhis:—*

We must go back with Policeman Day.

*As an apparition in the drum we did not quarrel with
Policeman Dey, for the drum if irresponsible; but in the
son he if out of place, because the son if consivs art and
responsible, and he if comic. An artist composite an
imotional sort) wud never hav allovv'd the 'common
country policeman tu imperil its \$diality. Lack of*

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

hymor if not amon Mr. Kipling's faults; and since fa can make fyn of the policeman motif when fa chooses, fa mvst hav a callosity svmwhere on his artisticfiderf, for else fa wud never hav admitud zhe pohceman intu his son). We are dispos'd tu diink zhat fa may hav infected himself, and zhat—tu return tu ovr comparison—fa if in zhis respectjust like Wordsworth, first, in ddiberatly choosin a particular kind of direct diction, and, secondly, in pushin it too far. if we shud ixamin more closely intu zhis matter we shud be exceedin ovr limits.' tions, andfind avrselves askinfor instance, whecher in zhe magnificent Soldier and Sailor too the quality of the swagger if wholly due tu the poetic method wich which it if so tntiely agreable.

Mr. Kipling has written some blank verse, and in The Sacrifice of ErHeb we find him adoptin a form of it which was special§z'd som fifty years ago. Tho this mey not indicate a consider d artistic preference, it if noteworchy that the form if simple and direct, and in so far congenial tu him; but its constreints are artificial and monotonvs, and its rythms poor and short; in which repects it if vnlike what we miht hav ixpected of him; and we hav noticed no trace of originality in his treet ment of it, a lcho' fa can takepeins wich nvthin withovt

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

in some wey distinguish) it. He has so true a feelin for the value of words, and for the riht cadence of idiomatic speech, and so vast a vocabulary, that his example if generally useful tu a generation whoose cvlturd spech rythms are so slovenly and vncertan. This if ispecially true of his more accentual verse, and it if on this account tu be regretted zhat ovt of his abvndance he if sometimes tempted tu overlod his lines the weiht szher of sound or of meenin, or of bot at woce; or this if bad example. In this respect he if tu be contrasted wich Wordsworth, for Wordsworth offends notorivly b§ the other extreme, tho when his copivs and throtlinneck' cloth if loosen d a fine diction flows fully, as in his description of Trinity College chapel:—

*where the statue stood
of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.*

Mr. Kipling's ethod seemstu shot him ovt from such hihts. We doo not remember anythin) of this quality in his poems.

The Kipling Dictionary if not a concordance but a bibliography, for whic his adm§erf wil be grateful.

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

May it bemeny yearshfore his concordance be due! Miiuwhilehi has hi; vivisectorfs and we has put wizh zhe dictionary aflological treetis,¹ which ixaminshis verbal piculiaritief; zheir classifsd collection if ofgreit interest; butwi think zhat Mr. Leeb'Lundberg'f book illvstmtes zhe difficvlty zhat a student mvst a/lweyffpnd in masterin zhe nuancesof a livin tvn zhat is not nativ tu him. For instance vnder'Suffix formations in Ay the aufhor givs threexamplef of Mr. Kipling 'sriginality, and zhey are zhe words unpicturesquely, monsoon ishly, and wholeheartedly. The second of these if a riht example of Mr. Kipling 'svrd'tnakin), bvt whole heartedly if a common word, and unpicturesquely is only rare becausezhe word if of no use; the connotation of picturesque bein suchzhat its negation or privation connotes nvfhin defnit; and we remarkzhat zhe word scowlily, which we remember meetin wizh sumwhere in Kipling, if absent from zhis list, it my not perhaps be wholly a coincidence zhat oftheser words zhe three on ufhitfh Mr. Leeb'Lundberg hasgon wron wer all of zhem in zhatt latter section of the alfabet where the Oxford Dictionary has not yet arrivd.

¹ *Word'formation in Kipling. A Stylisticphilohgical Study.* By W. Leeb'Lundberg. (Cambridge: W. Heffer.)

XIV

WORDBOOKS

FIRST PRINTED
Times Literary Supplement
4 August 1910

XIV

WORD-BOOKS

IT wud seemas if in pure literature -die classics of a ded languag must hav some advantag over zhose of a livin languag. First, becauseit mvst h an advantag tu hav zhe meenin of the wordsjixt, whichisinsvme mesvr accomplishtb\$ihvttify zhem out of cvrrncy; and secondly, becauseeny \$dealyzation of speech mvst be after where the common terms are not familiariz' b\$ deily use and vvlgar\$d b\$ ordinary association?. It if for zhis latter rufon zhat zh? Arabian Nights, for instance, if mvdh better reedin tu vs in an Italian translation zhan in our own English; and zhe comphter enchantment whichhildren find if greitly due tu zhe comparativ frefhnis of all languag tu zhem. Tor zhe same reesonf it zhat eny romantic tale wil appear more romantic in an anteeek or forin tvn zhan in ovr everydy speech. But as ovr common speech has some associations which art if glad be rid of, zher are vzhers zhe absence ofwhich if assurelya loss. For whether or not zher be eny greiter nobility in our man conceptions when we compare avrselvef wizh zhe ancients, yet nvne wud d?ny zhat zhe immense stores of our historic vocabulary gein

WORD'BOOKS

in recognition and significance b§ bein a still living tradition in vnbroken continuity of actual growth, shades ofmeenin more delicat zhan cud ever be invented, intricat poetic alluson, wizh consequent command of emotion and adaptability tu zhe most svttle varşeties offeelin, glints of cvlur from all clşmes and tşmes—zhefe are qualities which giv distinction tu much of the best of our modern literature. Ther is truly no kşnd of bewty more lşable tu mishandlin), no artistic effect more vncertan and fugitiv, zhan zhatt produced bi zhesse half'tones, as we mey call zhem; yet tu-dey in "Europe zhey are zhe legiti mat and natural welth of avr inheritance, and it wud be pedantry tu depreesiate it. And ifageinst zhis plasti' city and svttlety of livin) speech we wud balance zhe severer advantag which a ded languag mey be fhavht tu posess in zhe simple definition of its terms—which wud seem at first vew indispensable tu secure a bravd stiyle, we shall find zhat zher is svme deluson. Tor, havever zhe dictionaries mey define the meenin of a Greek word, we cannot avoid interpretivn it bş ade of our modern feelins and associations. No sentiment if safe from zhe con' tamination of avr Shifted şdeas; nor if zhe consivs ex' cluson of eny conception or emotion the same as zhe ignorance of it. Or suppose we are contented tu hav

WORD'BOOKS

*stript an old term of all adventitivs and Inter associa-
tion, it if left a naked nondescript, which we are vnable
tu recloche in the livin nuances of emotion with which
its contemporary thavht invested it. Scientific analysis
if always zhvs intrudir tu stvltifi ovr satisfaction; and
zhe reesonin is irreproachable zhat since, zho' a man wer
tu spend his whole life in zhe task, it wer impossible for
him tu (kink wizh zhe same thavhts as St. Paul or Plato
thavht wizh, it if zherefor ovt of his paver tu vnderstand
a single sentence of zheir writins exactly as zhey in-
tended it.*

*We hav not, however, tu look far for consolation; we
can quickly reasure avrselves zhat it if just as true zhat
man if always ike same as zhat he if always thangin.
it if demonstrable, no davt, zhat absolute identity of
vnderstandin if ovt of avr reech in our interpretations of
ancient thavht; bvt for zhatt very reeson we need not
wvrry avrselves too pvnctilivsly, nor be ashamd tu admit
zhat zher if always svmzliin of the nature of deluson in
avr lov of old literature. And in fact it if truer zhat
man if always zhe same zhan zhat he if never zhe same.
The universal mysteerivs force and vnfazhomably deep
instincts which constitute all zhat can properly be
termd life are but superficially affected b§ zhe consivs*

WORD-BOOKS

d?velopments of our intellect; and it if ixactly zhose fyndamental zhins which are zhe proper svbjectmatter of all art. For in so far as human art is instinctiv (as it sums originally tu be, it if prepostervs tu svppose zhat its svbject'matter can l?e at all amon avr purely intel lectual developments; wh?le in so far as in cvltivated soc?etiesf it has become consivs of its eims and mefhodf, it wil still seem zhat zhe intellect if better able tu deel artistically wizh what if ovtside it zhan wizh itself; for in zhis latter case it must become self'consivs, critical, and scientific.

Admittin, zhen, not only zhat it if impossible tu exclude zhe constantant ofourrthavhtfrom affectim avr literary art, but zhat zhis flox if in itself des?rable and a prolific sorce ofbewty, we mey also see zhat in d??lin wich zhe unchangeable fhins zhe hihest literature, especially the best poitry, if wonderfully free from the greit obstacle zhat zhe indefnition of its mateerial wud s??m tu oppose tu it.

Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit laetum neque amabile quic
quam.

WORD-BOOKS

O, were it but my life
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

O world, O life, O time,
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before.

Almost any examples are convincin. theappal is from motion tu motion; and criticifm of poitry if only wreslin with itself when it attempts analysis on a merely intdlectual basis. We shud not expect svch a method tu yeeld enyfhin more satisfactory zhan zhe analyses of zhe tmotions diemselves, as we find them in ps§chological trutises. Art is zhus self'conteirid and stable; and science not only dislikes art for zhis very quality of permanence, bvt has actually bun of'n led tu dini the natural supeeriority and predominance of zhe primal instincts over du intellectuial concepsio whic she if always fabricatin on the top of them.

Words are the mateerial of literary art, and words are ideasf; and what those §deasare if determin'd b§ the sense in which words hav bun usd b§ those whoose geenivs has rul'd the languag. A dictionary if a book

WORD-BOOKS

which collects afhoritativ uses; and it at wonce reveals zhat every word has several uses or meenins which it needs logic tu discriminate It if a pity zhat Lamb, in his Detached Thoughts on Books, never told vs what he fhavht of Johnson; Dictionary; whezher he held it worzhy tu rank wich his bilvvd Burton and Browne, or whezher he wud hav set it between Gibbon and zhe backgammon'bord. He was himself careful of words, and knew how tenderly zhey shud be us'd; and won cud beleeve zhat he miht hav therisht a fantastic divotion tuwardf a book so full of extracts. Bvt had hi nally ever made frends wizh zhe Dictionary, hei wud hav told vs. Wizh his peculiar personal idiosyncrasy, his individual irrisponsible taste, he wud, Likely inuff, hav felt some prudish scruple at zhe §dea of gettin eny knoledg of his craft at second/hand; and he cud never hav stvmackt zhe pedantry of some of Johnson s afhorities. of Robert Browning it if recorded zhat when he determind tu devote himself tu poetry, he red zhe whole of Johnson 's Dictionary thru, jvst as Gibbon, tu qualify himself for his greit historical task, stvdy'd zhe §tineraries of zhe Roman Empire; and zhe Doctor's twoo original folios wizh zheir vncvrteil'd quotationf are no bad reedin zhey are a magnificent feilure tu accomplish an impossible

WORD/BOOKS

fat—zhatt is, tu compile a dictionary svch as a literary artist wud love tuposess.

Tor havever good a vocabulary a writer mey hav wun in his reedin, and havever[fluently and instinctivly he my use it, yet in a languag so rich and old as avrs he cannot contientivlsly dispense wizh a dictionary; he cannot afford tu despise tke book zhat can both increese and theck his knoledg, and save him of'n from errorf which he wud wish tu avoid, In Dr. Murray's new dictionary In if nav beinprovided with a very complete book of reference; bvt while it altugezher exceeds his requ\$rements, hi has tu lament zhe iconomical brevity of zhe quotations, whifli are of nicessity riduced tu mire intelligible scraps, zho' in most cases zhe scraps are svfficient. it if possible zhat some dey zher mey be a purely literary dictionary com' p\$l'dfrom it. B\$ zhe authority of its historical riserch it promises tu doo good service in dheckin abuses. For instance, every wvn wizh a due respectfor avr literature must rigret zhe practice of zhose whoo first mistook zhi adverb 'darkling' for an adjectiv. The mere novelty of zhe wrotynes gave it voge, and nov it if a favvrit epithet wizh a whole class of poets, tu whoom eny recherche ixpresionfor darknes or dimnes if invaluable. The solicism if alredy so hacknyd and uselis zhat zhe

WORD-BOOKS

exposor of its history shud restore zhe word tu its original use.

A very good sort of literary dictionary is zhe New Shakespearean Dictionary,¹ b\$Mr. R. J. Cunliffe, whoo in a small duble'colvmnd quarto of 340 pages has collected all the words in Shakespeare (happily in'cludin thepoems) which hav gon ovt of use or changd in meenin since his time; and zhesere are so numervs zhat zhi author manteinf zhat Shakespeare's works mey be regarded as bein written in a ded languag. The hook seems trvstworthy and scientifically arrangd, and its carefully'Selected quotations are svfficiently lon tu identifi a rememberd context, ifenybody thinks zhat he can doo without a dictionary, let him open this volume at hazard; he wil be amazd tu find in hav meny familiar passages he has misst zhe true miininfor lack ofzhe ixact lernin which if here offer'd tu him. Afew test words are svuggested in zhe preface, and amon zhem if avr common adverb generally. This word in Shakespeare's idiom ment universally—zhatt if, with few or no ixceptions; it new allavs of so meny ixceptions zhat it can be us'd liven in opposition tu universally;

¹ A New Shakespearean Dictionary. By Richard John Cunliffe. (Blackie. 9s. net.)

WORD-BOOKS

and the shift of meenin, sliht as it if, greitly affects the whole sense ofeny passag in which the word occvrs. it if a good example, because it if so common a word and so likely tu pass vnsvspected. Mr, Cunliffe's hook looks tu be all that it pntends tu be. it isdhiws etymology, and etymology if 'generally' divoid of literary interest; of immense scientific import, it if in literature a matter of little more zhan eimles curiosity. whencesoever a word was originally dir§v'd, its fate if almost accidentally determin'd, and mey be consider d asfixt b§ use; and dhe words ofwhich it if necissary tu know zhe origin in order tu use them ariht arejvst thosefor which an educuted man needs no dictionary—at lust, if educated meens acqueinted with Greek and Latin—for they are Gruk and Latin words whichi, comin tu vs thru dhe Romance literatures, hav never got out oftuch wich their origins, and are besides so rich in derivativs as tu reveel any abuse and make it ridiculvs. The value of a classical education if indisputable in this respect: the security that it givs tu writers if perhaps what prompted Dr. Gais' ford'f famvs panegyric on University treinin, when he sed that 'it enahles one to look down with contempt upon others who have not enjoyed similar advantages'; but liven 'similar' if wron; the advantag if uneek, ther if

WORD'BOOKS

nuthin simile aut secundum. The posesion of a dictionary of all zhe Greek and Latin words in ovr languag cud scarcely rank as a 'similar advantage'; yet zhatt if zhe only svbstitute zhat a writer can hope for. Possibly zher if a phi for a lesser literary dictionary exclusivly on zhesse lines. The demandfor it wud increese if classical education declind, as it if tu be find it mey vnless it become more rusonable and eeconomical

Bvt even svch a dictionary as zhis wud be a hook of traditional uses razher zhan of origins; wvn mey mock at most so'ca/ll'd originf, and ask zhem uftiat zheir own originfwer. Herbert Spencer wudpresumably hav traced a/ll words tu a primitiv and accidental grvnt or squeek; andbitwun zhatt hipothetical squeek and zhe fenomenon of a thavs and different language of infinit varsity and complexity zher are no davt stages at which it if con'veenientfor aphilologist tu take his stand, until Professor skeat came tu zhe rescue in 1881 wizh his dictionary wvn miht sey zhat in England zhe knoldg of etymology was confind tu specialists. His book was not actually zhe first in the feeld; both Wedgwood and Muller had pvblisht etymological dictionarief of English. The former, wizh greit acutnes and indvstry, lackt, however, metodical knoledg of modern discoveries in comparativ

WORD/BOOKS

fology. Muller was hitted in zhatt respect; bvt Dr. Skeat's book was a wvnderful advance; and havity re joked in it for mnly thirty yeers we nov most warmly congratulate him on zhe completion of a new and fhvrvly revisd edition which if as much superior tu zhe old won as zhatt was tu its preedecessorf. only an expert cud giv eny wurzhy judgment of this nev book; bvt in zhe face of the modest acknoledgment which he mokes ofhis indetednes tu zhe New Oxford Dictionary, it if tu be remember'd zhat he himself collaborated in zhe reserdhes on which zhe conclusons in zhatt dictionary are based. This if from his new preface, where zher if also an amusin peccavi concemirh, zhe Indogermanic vowels. He tells vs zhat in zhe dæz when he first workt he was allovd zhe use of only three of the five theef vowels; e and o had been done away wizh. it seems zhat certan eevil'disposfd Germanf (of that period, notably curtius, Fick, Schleicher, and Yanicek!, had consp§rd ageinst zhem and thavht tu annihilate them; and zheir machinations had resulted in zhe discvmfitur and disappearance of dhe twoo vowels. But on zhe

¹ *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language.* By Rev. Walter W. Skeat. New Edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. London: Frowde. 38s. net.)

WORD-BOOKS

decease or disbandin of zhose brigands, when zhe land became quiet, zhen e and o agein reisd zheit heds and retrvnd tu zheir nativ haunts; and b§ zhe dhampionship of a new race of warriors,klugeFranck, Falk, and Torp, are navfirmly reestablisht. Won whoo never misstzhtese vowels from zhe fast edition mey be comforud b§ zhe asurance of zheir presence in the new book, and rigret zhat Professor skeat shud hav been so vnneassnrily put abavt. The nvmer of new words and corrections if incredible, and zhe laborivs revision of his own work after thirty yeers criticicm and attention if a feet zhe like of which few avthorshav accomplisht. Tho' not a literary dictionary, it abovnds in literary information, and its moderat size wil iniure it a place in every library.

XV

A LETTER TO A
MUSICIAN ON ENGLISH PROSODY

FIRST PRINTED

The Musical Antiquary

ist Number

October 1909

REPRINTED

WITH A FEW CORRECTIONS

Poetry and Drama

September 1914

XV

A LETTER TO A MUSICIAN ON ENGLISH PROSODY

M§ dear —, uftien lately yoo askt me tu recommend yoo a hook on English prosody, and I sed zhat I was vnable tu doo so, I had some scruples of consience, because, as a matter of fact, I hav never myself red eny of the trutises, tho I hav Icokt intu meny of diem, and from thatt, and from zhe report of students and revewers, I think zhat I know pretty well the natyir of zheir contents; so zhat yoor forzher inqu[^]rief cvme tu mi a; n diallinge tu ex'plein myself which if I cud not doo, I shud be. in a con' temptible position. I embrace zhe opportunity zhe more willingly because yoo are a musician, if m§ notions are reesonble yoo wil understand them; if yoo doo not, yoo mey conclude zhat diey are not wurzhy of yoor attention.

PRELIMINARY

It if impossible, havever wun m§ht desire it, tu set out wizh satisfactory definition; of Prosody and Poetic rythm, for zhe latter term ispednllly if difficvlt tufix: and it wil be best tu ixamin perfectid poetry and su vShat it if zhat we hav tu did wizh.

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

poet rhythm. if we take verses by Virgil, Dante or Milton, who were all of Asmartistic genius we find that their elaborate rhythms are a compound, arrived at by a conflict between two separate factors, which we may call the speech-rhythm and the Metric rhythm. Take an example from Virgil,

Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.

I have no doubt that I enjoy this rhythm as Virgil intended it, for I find it in mesotonic long and shorts, and I find that the speech-accent on antiquos, contradicting the metrical ictus, enhances the beauty, and joins on smoothly to the long level subterlabentia, with its two little gliding syllables at the end in quiet motion against the solid muros. There is no room for difference of opinion; and the same phenomenon meets us everywhere. The poetic rhythm derives its beauty from the conflict between a (prosodic) metre, which makes us more or less expect a certain regular rhythm of accent corresponding with the typical metric structure, and, on the other hand, a speech rhythm which gives it all manner of variety by overriding it in the above instance, though the essence of the metre is the sequence of long and short syllables; we yet regard the hexameter as a typically falling rhythm, i.e.

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

*wizh its man accents on zhe initial syllabkf of zhe con'
stitientfet, which wudgiv antiquos; and zhe bewty of
Virgil's line contains the contradiction or dislocation of
zhose accents.*

*Moreover, if we wer vnaacquainted wizh hexameter
verse (i.e. wizh zhe prosody), zfie line quoted wud seem
a lyne of pros e, in prose'ryfhm, and it wud be in itself no
less bewtiful zhan it is. only zhe knoledg zhat it if an
hexameter adds tu our satisfaction; zhe definition of zhe
value of zhe syllables and zhe recognition of zhe verse'
form giv vs plefvr, and especially becavse it if won of
meny vaneties of a most skilfully invented form, which
b§ zheir accumulation make pleesin poems. But zhis re'
flection me also convince vs of zhe svbjectiv natur of
zhe quality of poetic ryfhm, and consequently haw it mvst
defy exavstiv analysis, alzho it me allow of zhe analy
tical separation of its components.*

*And since we can imagin zhat zhe hexameter had
never been invented, and yet zhat zhese words miht still
hav been written, it wil follow zhat poetic rythm mey be
regarded as common speech/'ryfhm svbjected tu certan
definitions and limitations: and zhe lavs of zhese wil no
dabt be zhe prosody.*

Let vs for zhe moment svppofo zhat zher if no svdi

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

thinaf prosody, and inquire intu the elements or factors of speech'rythm.

THE VOCAL FACTORS OF SPEECH'RYT HM

Novif yoo reed English verse aloud, yoor man in devvr if tu texpress the rythrn. Yoo know whatyoo meen b\$ this, and yoo are aware whecher yoo are svccessful or not.

Thmfsctorf. Svppofity that yco express the rythtn as yoo wish, yoo wil find that yoo hav freely usd the only thru meens which are at yoor dispofal. First, yoo wil hav distinguisht some syllables b\$ their comparativ lenth and brevity. Secondly, yoo wil hav very'd the pitdh of yoor voice. Thirdly, yoo wil hav very'd the strenlt of yoor voice, enforcin some syllables with greiter lavdnes; and yoo wil hav freely combind date different components of (Paw.) rhythm. Ther if nothin else that yoo can doo tuwards ixpressin the rythm, ixcept that {and especially in elaboratly written verse)yoo wil hav relid agrat dul on pavses or silenass of sutable duration, These pavses are essential tu good reedin, bvt they are not essential tu avr present consideration. First zher are the metric pavses, which merely isolate balancinn sections of verse rythm. Then ther are the grammatical pavses or

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

stops: these are interruptions of the metric rhythm, which are either condoned for the sake of the sense, or are observed to indicate and separate the everyvarying sections of the speech-rhythm (being these to speech-rhythm what metric pauses are to the metre. Now the grammatical pause is a physical necessity, as the breathplace, and it must of course be a true 'rest' of actual time-value. But its time-value in poetry is indefinite, and it has; therefore no rhythmical significance except as the sign of the break in the grammar, if these pauses be a decided, you will find so few true intrarhythmical pauses left, i.e. time rests within a section of rhythm and essential to its expression, that we may consider them as; but they are) to a more advanced treatment of the subject, and confine ourselves; to the? active variety; of vocal effect, namely, QUANTITY, PITCH, and LOUDNESS.¹

¹ LOUDNESS. I use this word and not 'stress', because, though some authorities still maintain that stress is only loudness, I need the word stress to indicate a condition which is much more elaborated, and induced very variously. (a) I should admit that loudness may give stress, but (b) I hold that it is more frequently and more effectively given by tonal accent, in which case it is (for all purposes) included under pitch. (c) It is also sometimes determined by Quantity, and (d) sometimes by Position; as in the last place of a decasyllabic verse where the syllable lacks true accentual stress. When therefore I confine myself, third voice effect to loudness, and pretend that my classification

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

All'sufficiency of these three yoo wil find on examination that the of quantityfirst, thatt if difference of quantity, is the only won which wil giv rythm widiovt the tide of ither of the vthers. It if well tu make this quite deer, and musicantl examples are the simplest.

Let vs, tu begin with, take nn example ufhere all three are present, the slow moovement of an orchestral symfony. when this if perform d bi die orchestra we hear different t[me'valw of die notes, zheir differences of pitch, and actual enforcements of lovdnes, and all of these seem tu he essential tu the rythmic effect.

Exclusion of Bvt now if we take the same Andante andperform it lavdnes on the quireorgan, the conditions of which preclude the differencef of lovd and soft, we find diat did die effect if generally poorer than in die orchestral performance, yet die rythm if maffected. we hav here dien an

if ixavstiv, I lave a smvllfiav in m[demonstration: bvt yet wil perceeve we that it foes not nuitumllly invalidate the argument, because position is; the only condition which isapes; and thatt plainly belongs tu a much more ilabornt scale oftreement, whierin mattes wud be annlsdand the effects of zhe combinations of the different factors wud also be shown. For instance, a concurrence oflenh, hih pitch, lavdnes, and position givs an overwhelmin stress, and allpossible combinations among wil for of tiitm my occur, and the first fhreeof zhem are wil very varinble in digrn. It is no wvnder that it if difficvlt tu difine stress.

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

example of an elaborat ryflim expresst wizhovt vamtions of luvdnes.

Nov tu exclude vitdh. The commomst example zhat oflavdnes I can think of if zhe monotonia of the preyers in andpitdi. cafheedral service. Hire vaqetief of pitdh are of corse absent, bvt yoo mey generally detect zhe quantities tu hi complicated b\$ some variation of lavdnes. In proportion, havever, as monotonin if well dune the sound if level in force, verhaps yoo wil ask, vkere if zhe rythm? I was wvnce induced tu establish a quire in a contry thurch, and amon m\$ first tasks I had tu trein zhe boys in choral monotone. They wernaturally widiavtenynotion ofeducated speedd'rythms. But zher if no difficulty in teechin boys enyfhity zhatycoycorself understand; zhey can imitate enythity, and bve tu doo it. I had zherefor only tu offer die correct rythmftu zheir iarf, and zhey adopted zhem at wonce. when we had got die vowels and consonants riht, both tu spare m\$ own voice, and also because I prefer'd a model ufhidi cud not suggest stress tu zhem, I made the organ set zhe rythms, andpullin) out thegreit diapason I but on it the syllables of zhe Lord's Vryerfor die boys tu pick up. This waf of corse nuM^ but boo, boo, boo, only zhe boof wer of different durationf: yet dhe ryfhm was so distinct, it was so evident zhat zhe organ was seyin the

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

Lord'f preyer, that I was at fast rather shockt, and it seemd that I was dovin svmthin profane; for it was comick tu ike boys as well af tu me bvt the absvrdity soon wore off. Now here was ryihm without lavdnes orpithd.

ifyoo shud still ask what I meen b§ seyin that this was ry(hm, yoo mid tu ixtend yoor notion of speec rythm tu include every recognizable motion ofspudi in t\me. The Lord'f Vryer if not in poetic rythm, bvt if it had ban, then zhi organ wud hav ixpresst it uven more plainly, and zher if no tyne tu h dravn in spudh'ryfhmf htwiin zhofe zhat are proper verserythms and zhose that are only possible in prose: zher if really no good speeth'ryfhm which miht not be transfer d from prose intu a poetry zhat had a svfficiently ilabomtid prosody, with thisproviso only, zhat it mvst be a short member; for good prof e constrvcts and combinef its ryfhms so zhat in their ixtension they doo not make or svggest verse.

Since we see, then, that ryfhm may be ixpresst b§ quantity alone, wi hav tu ixamine Whether§zher pitch or loudness are sufficient in themselves tu giv ryfim.

Vhtfh alone. Let vs fast take vitdh. A common hym'tyne of eenqual notes wud seem tu be the most promisin example, and tu fulfil the condition}, bvt it dæx not. it if a melody, and thatt implies ryfhm, bvt in so far af it has

ON ENGLISH PROSODY



rythm it is dependent on its metre, which exists only by virtue of certain pauses or rests which its subdivision into short sections determines. Now, given these sections, they discover initial and other stresses which are enforced by the words or the metre or the harmony, or by all (km, and without these aids and interpretation of the structure if artificial, and it can be in many different ways.

It need only be considered Lavints, which may here be Lawdnes done. iisqVi as accent without pitch or quantity. Now if we take a succession of perfectly equal notes, differ only in that some of them (any that you may choose) are louder than the others, the experiment will suggest only the simple skeleton of the most monotonous rhythm, and if any of these delude itself, such as a succession of threes or fours, you will probably be unconsciously led to reinforce it with some device of quantitative phrase. To compare such a result with the experiment of beating the Lullay Vryer on the organ if you compare something too elementary to be of any value which is something that if too complex and extensive to define.

THE OFFICE OF PROSODY

Many examples will have sufficiently illustrated many men in; your conviction will depend on your own consideration

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

of the matter, on die svppofition zhatyooagreewi can make an important step, andsy that, lookin aszhe ques' tionfrom zhe point ofviw of spwHurysflim, it wud sum zhat it if zhe addition ofvrosody tu spiiilh'ryflim which dtterminf it tu bt poetic ryfhm or verse, what, zhen, prody exactly is Prosody? Our English word if not carry A over from the Greek word, with its vncertan and variivs meenin, bvt it mvst hav come with zhe Yrendk word thru zhe scolastic Latin; and like zhe French term it of sellable?, primarily denotes the rulesfor zhe tmtment of syllablef in verse, whezher zhey are tu be consider'd as lon or Jhort, accented or vnaccenud, tlidible or not, , . The syllablef, Mdh are the units of rythmic spufh, are b\ mtyir of so indefinit a quality and capable ofsuch different vocal ixpresion, zhat apart from zhe desire which every artist mvst fid tu hav his work consistent in itself, his appeel tu an audience wud convince him that zher if no chance of his ilaborat ryfms bein rihtly in' terpreted vnless hif tmtment of syllablef if vnderstood. Rjilef mvst zherefor nrfce and be agreed vpon for zlie tmtment of syllablef, and zhis if zhe first indispensable of fut, office of Prosody. Then, the syllables bein fixt, their commonest combination (which are practically com' rnensymt wizh word'-units) are defin'd and namd; and

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

these are calld feet. And after this the third step of Prosody is tu prescribē meetres, thatt is tu register the ofmeetre man systems of feet which peets hav invented tu make verses and stanzas. Thvs the Alcaic stanza if—

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} - - \cup - - \\ - - \cup - - \\ - \cup \cup - \cup \cup \end{array} \right| \left. \begin{array}{l} - \cup \cup - \cup \cup \text{ bis} \\ - \cup - - \\ - \cup - - \end{array} \right\} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{A. B. bis} \\ \text{A. C.} \\ \text{B. C.} \end{array} \right.$$

and in tahylutity meetres prosody if at wonce invold in rhythm, for we my ssy generally that every mutre has Rythm a typical accentual ryftim of its own—which was pre of meetre sumably the motiv of its invention—tho it may be in some cases difficvlt tufix on won tu the excluson of all others certanly (tu take iisy examples) we mey regard the hexameter as a typically fallin ryfhm, and the iambic as a risin ryfhm. The force of this prosodial rythm wil vary in different meetres, and with different reeders. but won thin stands out very prominently, be namely, that in the essential shme of the Greek meetre bas'd on which I hav tabulated above it if the quantities only that different areprescib'dandfxt, while the accents stresses are not factors priscrid, so that eny speech'ryfhm while had a corre spondin sequence of those quantities wudfit the skeme;¹

I Notalways mikingood verse; bvt the deetals of thatt are omitted as not affectin the argument: theirvnttie; of'n cancel eech other.

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

whzras, if die matte had been an accentual skeme, thatis if, if die syllabic sins had bun inueterminat wich respect tu quantity (insted of bein lons and shorts), bvt mark with prescrib'd accents in certain places, then the quantities wud hav been free, and zny speech'ryflim with a correspondin seequence of accents wud hav fitted die form, independently of die lenth or shortnes of any won particular accented or vnaccented syllable. Ther cud divs be twoo quite distinct systmf of prosody, accordin as the meetres wer rul'd b§ won or other ofthese different factor} of speech'rythm.

THREE KINDS OF PROSODY

Now the history of European verse shows us three distinct systmf ofvrosody, Mdh can be numd:—

- 1. The Quantitiv system.*
- 2. The Syllabic system.*
- 5. The Stress system.*

I wilgiv a short account ofeech ofthese.

1. The system of die Greeks was scientifically founded The quart' on quantity, because they knew zhatt tu be the only won titiv syttm. of the three distinction} of spoken syllables which wil giv rythm b§ itself. Bvt die speech'quantitief of their syllables bein as indeterminut as ovrs are, the Greeks

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

*devisd a convention b§ which zheir syllables wer separ
ated intu twoo classes, wvn ofhty syllabkf, zhe vdier of
ihort, zhe lon beity twice the. duration of the short, as
a minim tu a crochet; and this artificial distinction of zhe
syllables was the foundation of their prosody. The
convention was absolutely enforced, eeven in their profe
oratory, and zheir verse cannot be vnderstcod vnless it if
strictly obfervd. For zhe result which they obtaind was
zhis: die quantities gave such markt and definit ryfhms,
zhat zhefe held zheir own in spite of the varivs speech'
accents which overbid them. The Latins copyin their
method arrivd at a like result.*

2. *The syllabic systim, whichhas preveil'd in varivs The syllabic
developments thruavt Europfrom the decy of the Greek system.
systim vp tu dieprefent time, had no more scientific basis
than the imitation of the Latin poitry b§ writers whoo
did not understand it. Bvt I beleeve zhat in svdh matters
the final cavse if the efficient cavse, and zhat it was
zherefor the possibility of the results which we hav wit
nesst zhat led them on zheir pathles experiments. Criti
cism discovers twoo weeknesses in the system: won, the
absence ofeny definit prosodial principle, the other, which
followffrom zhe first, the tendency for different and incom
patible principles tu assert zhemselves, indiscriminaty*

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

*overran) eefh other's afhority, vntil zhe house if so
divyded ageinst itself that it falls intu anarchy.*

*I wil Shortly illustrate won or twoo points. First, m§
statement zhat zhis syllabic system arose from writin
quantitiv verse wizhavl zhe quantities The octosyllabic
church'hymns giv a good example, and for all zhat I
know zhey mey hav actually ban zhe first step, The
erlust of zhesse hymns wer composd in correct §ambic
matte, e.g. (forzh cent.):—*

Splendor paternae gloriae
De luce lucem proferens
Lux lucis et fons luminis
Dies dierum illuminans.

*Compare wizh zhis what writers wrote whoo did not
know zhe classic rules, e.g.:—*

- I. Ad coenam Agni prouidi
Et stolis albis candidi
Post transitum maris rubri
christo canamus principi.
2. Ne grauis somnus irruat
Nee hostis nos surripiat
Nee caro illi consentiens
Nos tibi reos statuatur.

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

Sudh stanza; virtually contain the whole of Euw pian syllabic Prosody; 'zho' as a matter of fact the ryle of ilifon, ufhidh zlitfe writer? of'n neglected, was pre ftrvd. since zhefe hymns wer intended tu be svn tu tune; zhat wer generally of aqual notes wizh tendency tu wltzmat accent, the quantities did not signifi and zher was a tendency to alternate stress, which came tu be the norm and bane of syllabic verse;² and zhis leeds tu another svmwhat cnrivs observation, namely, zhat zhes writer? of nonquantitiv gambles wer wizhheld from die natural tendency tu write merely in alternat stress tu sut zheir tune; (see ex. 2, page 68) b§ zheir familiarity wizh the free ryfltm; of zh? older wellAvvd hymf;³ and since zhose broken ryflms had bun originally occa'

¹ M§ necessary brevity confines me tu consideration of the disyllabic meetref; bvt zhis if jvstifyd b§ zheir overrulin historical importance, and their oueruflumin preponderance in European syllabic verse.

² In the absence of a filosofic grammar of rythm won can only offer opinion; as gesses, but it wud sum tu mi zhat alternat stress can only be of rhythmic value in poetry as the firmest basis for the free-est elaboration. Won's memory hardly reeches back tu the time when it cud satisfy wvn. The force of it always remeins as won of zhe most powerful resorces of effect, bvt its vnreleevd monotony is tu an educated ear more likely tu madden zhan tu lull [See Remark, No. XII, p. 84.]

³ And 'Turcos oppressi et barbaras gentes excussi* if in zhis category.

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

*fond b§the vnalterable overnlin feetur of zhe lan
Sung, zhey wer almost as difficult tu avoid as zhey wer
eesy tu imitate, it if putty artan zhat zhefrequency of
inversion of the first foot in all English syllabic §ambic)
verse if an vnbroken tradition from zhe Latin; zhe con'
vnnience of ollovity a disyllable at zhe hginnin^ of zhe
line bein convey'd and incvrgd b§precedent*

*The 'prosody' of European syllabic verse mey be
rvffly set ovt as follows:—*

(i) Ther mvst be so meny syllablef in zhe verse.

*(2) Any extra syllablef mvst be accounted for b§
ilison.*

(5) Any syllable mey be lon or short.

(4) Ther if a tendency tu a/lternat stress.

*This if honistly -Axe wretched skehton¹ (indeed, in
Milton 's perfected 'pambics' we my add zhat eny syllable
my be accented or vnaccented), and no amount of d?<>
velopement can ribild its hybrid constrvction.² Eor avr*

¹ *Tr§ ztii experiment of svpplptt) lacunae. Suppose for syllables tu be
missityfrotn zhe middles respectivly of a Greek iambic, a "Latin hexameter,
and an English blank verse. In zhe twoo former cases zhe prosodial limitii'
tions exclude meny durable wurds; in die syllabic shme almost eny
wvrds wilfit.*

² *I wud not wish tu sum tu vnderestimnt zlie extreme biwty tu which
verse has atteind vnder the syllabic system. Shakespeare and Milton hav*

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

present consideration of the rule} of Prosody the hare skeleton will serve; but to the description we may add that the history of its development shows that it determined its metrical form} mainly by time, and that 'stress', the beauty (which) of equal force to oppose it, gradually pre-dominated, invaded and practically ruled syllabic verse. It was, before it was openly recognized, or any hint was given to formulate its principles, or construct a prosody of it, the principles of which are irreconcilable with the syllabic system, and which I will now describe.

3. stress/prosody, in this system the natural accent. The stress centual speed/rhythm come to the front, and are the system. determine factor of the verse, overruling the syllabic determination. These speed/rhythm were always present; they constituted in the classical verse the main passages of blank verse as fine as poetry can be. I would make three remarks here. (1) A free and simple basis (such as the syllabic system has) probably offers the best opportunity for elaboration. (2) It is probable that no verse has ever been subject to such various elaboration as the European syllabic verse; the question is rather whether any further development on the same lies if possible. (3) On the simplest syllabic scheme it is impossible in English to write two verses exactly alike and equivalent, because of the infinite variety of the syllabic unit and its combinations: and these natural and subtle differences of value, did common to all systems of prosody, are perhaps of greater rhythmic effect in the syllabic than in the quantitative system.

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

varity of effects within zhe different mttres, bvt zhey wer counterpointed, so tu spnk, on a quantttiv ryfhm, zhatt is', on a framework of strict (vnaccented) time, which not only imposd necessary limitations bvt, cer tanly in Latin, tu n greit ixtent ditermind dieir forms. In zhe syllabic Prosody, in uflifli dteprosodial rules wer so mucfh nlaxt, zhtfe spiidh'ryfhms came in zhe best writers tu h of first importance, and in Milton {for example) wi can sn zhat zhey are only wizhheldfrom absolute a/fhority and liberty b§ observance of a con' servativ syllabic fiction, which if sofeeturles zhat it needs tu be expleind whi Milton shud hav thavht it of eny value. Tor all Milton s freespeech rythms, ufhidh are zhe characteristic hwty of his verse, and b§zheir boldms moke his originality af a ryfhmist, are confynd b% a strict syllabic limitation, viz. zhat zhe syllables ufhidh compose diem mvst still hip die first twoo rules of zhe syllabic Vrosody, and be resoluble intu so meny jambs'. Bvt zh?se so'call'd §ambs are zhemselves nav digradid tu nvzhin), for die disyllabic unit ufhidi still preserves zhatt old name has no definition: it has lost its quantities, nor are its lost quantities always indicated b§ accent or stress; its disyllabic quality, too, is resoluble b§ zht old lav of Latin difon (ufhidi Milton ixteiid tu liquids,

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

ridwn) chaucer'f practice tu artanfixt rule/) intu tri' syllabic form;, so zhat either or both of zhe syllable? ofzhefictiv %amb my be lon> or Short, accented or vn' accented, uftife zhe whole my h a trisyllabic foot of meny vaqetief. Yet in hi; carefully compofd later poitry Milton kept strictly tu zhe syllabic rulef, and never allovd himself eny rythm ufliidh cud not be pro sodially interpreted in zhis fctitivs fafliion—countedon die finger?. Nov zhe stress'systim merely casts off zhis fiction of Milton 's, and it dismiss?; it zhe more redily becavse no won except won or twoo scholars has ever understood it

stress kit^ admitted tu rule, it follows zhat zhe stress' rythms are, vp tu a certan point, identical wizh modern mufic, uflierin every bar if an accent follow'd b§ its complement: and zheris no ryfhm of modern mufic Mdh is not a/lso a possible and proper ry(hm of stressor0' sody; and die recognition of pure stress'prosody waf no davt manly influenced b§ die svccessef of contemporary mufic. Bvt poetry if not bound, af our mufic if, tu hav eequal barf; so zhat its rythmicfeeld if indefinitely w\$der. Tu understand die speedh'ryfhmf of poetry a mufician mvst realize from vShat an enormvsfeeld of ryfhm he if excluded b% hif rule of eequal barf. Muficianf, havever.

LETTER TO A MUSICIAN

*dco not navadyf n??d tu b? inform d of this; for, havity
zxcityid all zhe motions zhat their dheins allav'd dhem,
They are alredy htginnity tu ngret zheir bond?, and tax
zlieir ing?nyiity tu escape from zhem, a? zhefmquentsynco'
putation? anddhang offyme'signatyire in zheir music testify*

*what rules zhis new stressorosody wil set tu gvvern
its ryfhmf won cannot foresee, and titer is as yet no recog'
nizd prosody of stress'verse. I hav experimened wich
it, and trid tu determin what those rules mvst be; and
zher is little davt zhat zhe perfected Prosody wil pey
greit attention tu zhe quantitiv value of syllables, zho
not on zhe classical system, Here, havever, I wish only*

*Indifference tu quantity if the strungest fenomeon in English verse.
Our languag conteins syllables as lon as syllables can be, and others as
Short as syllables can be, and yet the twoo extremes are very commonly
treeted as ryfhmically iquivalent. A sort of rythmical patter ofstress is set
up, and MISPRONUNCIATION is RELIED ON tu overcame my favlse
quantities'. This was taught me at school, e.g. die Greek word
was pronounced glewkeus, as a spondu of die hiv'ust class accintid strongly
on the first syllable, and then had tu be red in such a verse as this (cow
spondin tu the tia of the line quotedfrom Virgil)—*

τοῦτ' ἄρα δεύτατον εἶπεν ἔπος, ὅτε οἱ γλυκὺς ὕπνος.

*It is rinlly difficult tu get an averag classical scolar, whoo has bun zdyicuud
as I was, tu su dxat dxe is zny absurdity hire. On the vdier hand, an averag
zdyicatid lady wil not beleeve that the scolars can begilty of an absurdity so
manifzst. (See Rimark V,pp. 79-80.)*

ON ENGLISH PROSODY

*tu differentiate diatt sysUm from zht vdierf, and tdiat I
hav sed fnowf zhis conchfon:*

SUMMARY

- i. In zhe Griik sysUm zhe Prosody if quantitiv.*
- 2. in die syllabic sysUm it if 'syllabic' (a; describd).*
- 3. In the stress'system it if accentual.*

*And whilein zhe classical Prosody zhe quantitiefwere zhe
man prosodial basis, first order'd and kid davn, wizz die
spudh'ryftwif couvnterpointid vpon it, in die stress
sysUm, on dit vzher hand, it if zhe spiiih'ryfhmf which
are die basis, and zheir quantitiv syllablef wil h so
order d af tu enforce diem, and zheir vaqtief wil h
practically similar tu die vaqtief of modern myific wizz
its minimf, croflitts, quaverf, dotud note; ♪, ♪, ♪.*

ihife (hityf hity so, it wud sum tu mi indispensable <con
diat eny trntis on Prosody /hud recognize ditfe fhm cluson
different systnnf: indud, a Prosody Mdh dvef not
recognize diem if tu mi vnintelligible. Btfore mi few
final rmarh yco wil ixpect mi tu sty svmihin) about
rime.*

RIME

*Rules for qme are strictly a part of Prosody widiin
m[definition of zhe term, bvt diey wllfor no discvsn*

IS

SUMMARY

here, it is, however, well to understand the relation in which rhyme scientifically stands to poetry. The main thing in poetry must be the *idea* which the words carry; its most important factor; are the *esthetic* and *intellectual* form, and the quality of the diction in which the ideas are conveyed: with none of these (things) are we concerned, but suppose these at their best, with the rhythm suitable and the Prosody also sufficient, the poet will still find that his material is of an insurmountably refractory in the matter of syllabic euphony. His, with it, that the sound should always be beautiful or agreeable, and this is impossible, for language was not invented with this aim, and it almost inevitably falls short of what is desirable (the history of English accidence is a disgrace to the *esthetic* faculty of the nation); there is, in fact, a constant irredeemable deficiency in this merely phonetic beauty, and it is reasonable that extraneous artifices should have been devised to supply it. Alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are all contrivances of this sort; they are in their nature beautifications of the language independent of the *idea*, and of the rhythm, and of the diction, and intended to supply for their artificial correspondence the want of natural beauty in the garment of language. But it must not be overlooked that they work also well when

SUMMARY

necessitated by the unsentimental character of the syllabic Prosody, which having in ignorance discarded the scientific Prosody of the poetry which it imitated, had to devise new remedies for itself experimentally as it grew up, and eagerly seized on such external artifices of speed to dress out its waverings. First of all an architect's method has lost its living tradition? After Reform will seek to face itself with superficial ornament. Alliteration in early English Poetry was a main feature of structure. It has perished as a metrical scheme, but it is freely used in all poetry, and it is so natural to language that it finds a place in the commonest as well as in the most elaborated speed of all kinds. Rhyme has had a long reign, and still flourishes, and it is in English worn of the chief metrical factors. Like a lowborn upstart it has even sought to establish its kinship with the ancient family of rhyme by incorporating the aristocratic h and y into its name. As it distinguishes itself by what has no other distinction, its disposition of Hermin's stanza-form, &c; and for this reason it enjoys a prominence for which it is not fitted. Dryden, indeed, and others have ridiculed the notion of 'unrhymed' verse in English; and their opinion is a fair consequence on the poverty of their Prosody. Milton's later poems were an attempt so to strengthen English

SUMMARY

Vrosody af tu render it independent of r\me. in m% opinion he sav exactly vShat waf needed, and ii wud hav been strange if he had not seen. R\$me if so trammellif^, its effects so cloyiq, and its wvrzhiest resorcef are so quickly exavsted,¹ and of^n of svfli conspicyivs artif tiality, diat a Vrosody Mdi waf good envjf tu doo widiovt it wud immeediatly discard it, in sp^te of its almost vnparalleVd adheevments.

REMARKS.

I. *if zhefe three systemf are tu he treeted of together af wvn system, it if necessary tufpnd a common'rnefvr of diem, and die science ofryfhm if atprefent imdequat tu die task.*

II. *The confnfin) of diem if so universal af tu hav acqupd a sort of a>fhority; and die confyifon haf dis' credited die whole svbject.*

III. *The man sorce of error if die wror^ wey in Mfli classical scolarfreed classical verse, and die teedhir^ of dieir misinterpretation in our scoolf. classical poetry heity on a quantitv system ofloqf and fhort, it mvst be red, not af we reed ovr syllabic verse, bvt in lon>f and*

¹ *Ifyco obstrve die qmes tu YLnfcht in Spenser'? Faery Queen, yco wil find die pom considerably famngd thereby*

SUMMARY

Jhorts af it waf compofd, and if it if not so nd it if misunderstood, if it if red in lons and shorts, dien zhe quantitv ryfhmf appnr, and die spiidh'accents giv no difficvltv.

IV. *Tu giv tvvn a//convincity example of ufhat classical scolnrf actually dco, b§ trinity -die different systimf as iquivalent, -die hexamiter wil serve. This, af Professor Mackail wvnce compkind tu mi, if red bh them af AN ACCENTUAL RHYTHM IN THE TRIPLE TIME OF MODERN MUSIC, diatt if, made vp of tribrachs and trochiif all stress'd on dhe first syllable. It if of corse patent diat if die hexamiter wer in a tine of modern music it wud bi a duple and not a triple t^me; bvt it haf absolutely nvfhity in common wizh zhe stress'ryfhmf of modern mufic.*

V. *A difficvltv if naturally felt in dii vnl^kelihood diat svdh a consensus oflernid opinion, from die confix dent mvltsic[ence of Goethe tu dii nqually confident fastidivsnis of Matthew Arnold, Jhud bi open tu svdh a monstrvs riprodi of ehmentary incompetence. Bvt dii explanation if not difficult, if die whole blunder if per>cnvd af die misreprifentation of quantity b§accent. English puple al ihink diat an accent {or stress} makes a syllable loty, ufheraf meny of our wurd f are accentidaf*

SUMMARY

independently of zheir quantitie; a; zhe Greek wvrd; wer, e.g. magistrate, prolific: and &ll our pyrrhic wvrd; (= ˘ ˘) fyke habit, very, silly, solid, scurry, are accented, tyke zhe Latin, on die first syllable, and svme very strongly, and zhis of corse absolutely explode; zhe vvlgar notion zhat accented syllable; can be reckon d a/lwey; a; lon;beside;, yoo my see zhat zhis accent in some cases actually shortens the syllable/prr/zer, a; in zhe wvrd battle; for in zhe older form battail, in ufliidh die first syllable had not zhis decided accent, yco wil not pronounce it so Jhort, bvt immeediatly zhat yco strenftienits accent,a;in ovr battle (= bat'l) zhe t clo;e; vp zhe a mvfli more quickly and perceptibly Shorten; it.

VI. Tu evil Milton; blank verse ^ambic, a; he himself ca/U'd it, i; ree;onable envff, and in die absence of a modern terminology¹ it serve; well tu distinguish it from zhe hexametric epic verse, and it describe; its du syllabic basis, and suggests its r&iq ryfhm (ufhidi my r^htly be consider d a; zhe typical gamble stress, svfli a; we see in Catullus'; carefully accentual verse, 'vhasellus ille quern uidetis hospites', &c.): moreover, ovr disyllabic verse i; zhe direct descendant of and substitute for die

¹ Thi absence of terminology is Evidence ojihi vnsceptific carncter of zhe systim, as I hau dtscqb'd it.

SUMMARY

classic iambic. Bvt a scientific twtis on Vrosody cannot afford tu vfe analogical termf.

VII. I Jhud confidently gess "hat ihefyvcfcot mntref of our blank verse, &c, came from zhe Sapphic l\$ne. This waf a/lwyf familiar and waf very erly ridyiced b[myifical settir^f tu an accentual shme, Mdh still obtainf in common settityf of decasyllabic (%ambic Ipnef in dhvrdh hymf, and occvrf frequently in a// ovr blank verse. I open Wordsworth at hazard in The Borderers and f^nd—

*Here at my breast and ask me where I bought it
I love her though I dare not call her daughter,
oh the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
justice had been most cruelly defrauded.*

Thtfe lief wud &ll h qu^te cvmfortable in ike notorbs Needy Knife-grinder, which wasa skit on the accentual Sapphic, zho' it isof^n token seeriy.

VIII. I quote Ms from The Times, April 10, 1903. fAn English scholar, confronted with the following lines—

Δαίμων στυγνὸς ἐπλανᾶτο νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμῶν
κοιμωμένων
ἡπᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν ἐχλεύαζε κάρριπτε σπόρους
θανάτου

SUMMARY

will probably need to look at them twice before he realizes that they are hexameters. Yet they scan on exactly the same principle as . . . Goethe's' hexamiterf. Thy are not more barbarvs, not a uftiit; and scohr? rud Virgil muchaszhife lie? wer written; dier if little difference.

IX. *The Professor of Latin at wvn of ourXJniver^ sitieswvnce told methat of all hispnplf theton men had b^far die best sense of quantity, THEY HAVE NO SENSE OF QUANTITY AT ALL. THEY HAVE ONLY A KNOWLEDGE OF QUANTITIES, hammer d intu diem b% loty experience in zhe scanniti) of vers if made b% munf of a^c</radus'. if zhey pronounced die wvrdf properly diey wud not mid a gradus.*

X. *I waf wvnce tr^ity tu persuade zhe risponsible hed of wvn of avr largist scoolf tu riform die tiihir^ of Gruk; and I nipon'd divs wizh him: ^V7ud yoo not sty zhat TEUKKE (TUXTI) w/af a good wvrdf for dii end of an [ambic verse?'*

'certainly/ hi sed, 'a very good wvn:

^Andyetyco wud sty, no dovt, rfj^PSEUKKE(yuxf)) waf n bad wvn!

^A horrible false quantity/ hi sed.

^I waf well aware zhat yoo wud bi Jhockt at die

SUMMARY

notion,⁹ 1 repfyd, ^eand yoo wil no davt agree with me that zhe reef on u\$h\$ wvn if good and zhe vzhēr if bad if zhat zhe vovil in zhe first syllable U oj different speedh'valyie in zhtfe twco wvrd!

'B§alleenfshi se, ^fdiatt if jvst zhe point, in TEUKEE it if fliort, and in PSEUKEE it if lon>!

^cBvt hew if it zhen, if, af yoo sty, die essential difference between zhefe twoo wvrd if in -die speeih'valyie oj zheir vouelf, zhat yoo pronounce diem al^ke? if zhey are pronounced al^ke if not wvn af good af ike vzhēr? and haf not zhe boy whco considerf zhern equivalent got hold of zhe essence of zhe matter, vnderstandir^ more or less ufliat he if about vShen he if wqtity hif versef; ufli^le zhe boy whco observef zhe distinction if wvn whco dves not ithink for himself, nor trvst hif ear, bvt mechanically adopts zhe me enisles ryilef zhat are forced vpon him? And if he if not b% natjir dvll and timid, ufliidh he ihowf svm symptomf of beir^, if not This sort of teeihir^ die very meenf tu cov him and mvddle hif breinf?'

He receevd mj> demonstration cortevsly af an in' geenivs quibble.

XL The yise of zhe Greek quantitv terminology in expleinin> syllabic or stress'verse imptyef zhat zhe termf are equivalent in die different systemf, or requpef dial

SUMMARY

zhey /hud be plainly differentiated, it if demonstrable zhat zhey are not equivalent, and if zhey are different Hated zhe absvrdivty of avplpty The Greek notion? tu English poetry if patent. Tq zhe inverse experiment of wqtity Greek verse wizh zhe 'syllabic definition of zlie classic feet.

XII. The syllabic system atteind its refylts b% lerned elaboration; and in blank verse zhis elaboration evolv'd so meny fortntf of zhe l%ne (af we see in Milton) zhat almost eny profe, ttfhidh manteind a feir sprinklin) of alternat accents, cud be red af blank verse; zhe pyieqle degradation of zlie haphazard decasyllabic ryfltm satis' fpd zhe verse^moker, and eequully be<jbl'd zhe wiiter of profe, whoo savht after rythmical effect. A clergyman wvnce sympathetically confesst tu me zhat he waf himself b% natjir svmfhirt) of a poet, and zhat zhe con' viction had on wvn occafon been strangely forced vpon him. For after preedhi^ hif first sermon hif rector sed tu him in zhe vestry, ^fDco yoo know zhat yoor sermon waf a//l in blank verse?' ^eAnd, b'% George, it waf (he sed wizh syme pqde); ^ci lookt at it, and it was!' This man had had zhe nfual lott) classical treini% and waf a fellow of hiscolleg.

XIII. Tujvdgefrom wvn or twoo examplef l /hud be

SUMMARY

tempted to study the qualification; of an English prosodist might (i) the educated misvnderstandin) of Greek and Latin verse; (2) the nature of modern myifi- cation. Hence method (1) to satisfy himself in the choice of a few barrel-organ rhythms, and (2) to exert his ingenuity in finding them every where. The result is not likely to be recommendable to a student.

ROBERT BRIDGES

[The following hitherto unpublished account by Robert Bridges of his Syllabic Free Verse (later called NeoMiltonic Syllabics) is dated Dec. 1923.

Although in manner the note is perhaps a little out of keeping with these examples of his published work, I print it here, after the Letter on Prosody, because this is its proper place from the point of view of subject' matter.

This account of the origin of its metre was written some two years before The Testament of Beauty was definitely begun. A fragment of fourteen lines exists, however—dated Christmas 1924—of which the initial seven lines form the beginning of the poem.]

M. M. B.

'NEW VERSE'

EXPLANATION OF THE PROSODY OF MY LATE SYLLABIC TREE VERSE*

THE reason for my writing this is that the strict construction of the verse is not likely to be understood without my explanation. On its first appearance for instance, there was a long learned account of it in The Times by the Secretary of the British Academy, which was altogether wrong.

The most intelligible and straightforward way of describing it will be to tell by what steps I came at it. So that I will describe its 'genesis'.

When I was revising my Milton's Prosody for its last edition, it struck me that Milton had freed every foot in his blank verse [using the term foot from the analysis of blank verse as a disyllabic metre of five feet] except the last: and that he had done this by excluding extrametrical syllables within the line [the occurrence of such syllables had become common in the dramatic blank verse, as that became more accentual], and that the reason why he had not freed the last foot also was that he allowed it still to carry an extrametrical syllable.

By having freed the feet' I mean that in his metrical system there was no place in which any one syllable was necessarily long or short, accented or unaccented, heavy or light: but this, as I say, did not obtain in the last foot.

It must here be parenthetically questioned whether Milton ever inverted the accent of the last foot. It is a common opinion among critics that in this place (what is called) an accentual trochee 'cannot' take the place of (what they call) an accentual iambus. But good

'NEW VERSE*

examples prove that poets have wished to give this exceptional effect, and it is only necessary to quote one line from Keats:

'Bright star would I 'were stc'dfast as thou art!

of which line the intention cannot be questioned: and plenty of examples might be given, and Milton's own practice is at least in doubt: but he certainly ventures it very seldom, and, whether or no he wished to do it, he was forbidden by the allowance which this last foot had in his system to take an extrametrical syllable. A line with an inverted last foot might have read like a line deficient in one syllable with an extrametrical ending.

Seeing then that to free the last foot it was only needed to forbid the terminal extrametrical syllable, and that Milton had, with so great effect, excluded it from every other place in his syllabic verse; it seemed to me that the next step that he would have taken (had he continued his work) would have been to forbid it also in the last place.

I naturally wondered what the effect would be, and determined to experiment on it.

One cannot originate a poem in an unknown metre, for it is familiarity with the frame'work which invites the words into their places, and in this dilemma I happily remembered that I had had for many years a poem in my head which had absolutely refused to take any metrical form. Whenever I had tried to put it into words the metre had ruined it. The whole poem was, so far as feeling and picturing went, complete in my imagination, and I set to work very readily on it, and with intense interest to see what would come. I was delighted to find that the old difficulty of metering it had vanished, and it ran off quite spontaneously to its old title The Flowering Tree, which is dated in my book Nov. 7 1913.

I had written it in sixes, that is in twelves with a caesural break: and

'NEW VERSE*

*it was no doubt the subject which led me to choose that form. Having exploited it as I thought successfully, and arrived at very rich and varied rhythms, it was after that single experiment a very definite form of marked effects and possibilities which I could use now at will: or, at least, it was ready within me to receive or reject anything that arose. And on Nov. 28th, when I had been considering whether I would send His Majesty a Christmas Poem to com' memorate my appointment in his household, the poem called **Noel** appeared on the scene.*

'A frosty Christmas Eve' when the stars were shining.¹

This was sent to the King at Christmas, and His Majesty sent it to The Times for publication.

Of that poem I can say that it has won more favour from all classes of people than any other poem that I ever wrote: and since not one of the readers knew how it scanned, it seemed to me that my extension of Milton's rules must be worth something.

As for the novelty of it I may record that my old friend Mackail, a Professor of poetry and a writer of poems, whose learning cannot be questioned, wrote to me, when he read it in The Times, asking 'what is this lovely new metre f

I must interrupt my narrative to remind the reader that I am only writing business and narrating the relevant facts which influenced me.

For some years after this I felt no call to poetry, but in 1921 I had some months of good disposition and wrote many poems; the most of them were in old-fashioned forms. I made however 3 or 4 attempts at this particular metre that I have been describing, all of them expert" ments to discover its relation to rhyme. These are negligible here:

¹ Which I Made walking up and down the "quarter deck* in my garden one winter evening.

'NEW VERSE*

but an experiment in hendecasyllabic verse with a caesura after the 6th place, that is a line of 6+5 instead of 6+6 discovered new effects.¹ My main interest however was in prosecuting my 6+6 successes.

I saw that these twelves, or Alexandrines, had in Milton's practice no title to a fixed caesura. In all his work from earliest to latest he delighted in the Alexandrine without its hemistichs, and here was a promising field of freedom which it was most exciting to explore.

I had no notion how the thing would hold together when thus apparently freed from all rule. It was plainly the freest of free verse, there being no speech-rhythm which it would not admit; and I saw also that all the old forms of 12-syllable verse, the Greek iambic, the scazon, the French Alexandrine &c., would be admitted on equal terms. It was partly this wish for liberty to use various tongues that made me address my first experiment to a parrot, but partly also my wish to discover how a low setting of scene and diction would stand; because one of the main limitations of English verse is that its accentual (dot and go one) bumping is apt to make ordinary words ridiculous; and since, on theory at least, there would be no decided enforced accent in any place in this new metre, it seemed that it might possibly afford escape from the limitations spoken of. And thus I wrote Poor Poll. This was printed separately with explanatory notes on the prosody.

This 12-syllable verse then is written by the rules of Milton's Prosody with only this difference, viz. that it forbids the extra'

¹ *In the poem Mid the squander'd colour; in an earlier sketch of which I found some of this metre governing its first spontaneous expressions.*

'NEW VERSE*

metrical syllable at the end of the verse. All its liberties follow logically from that development. The 'elision' of vowels and semivowels is the same as in Milton, and as with him optional; only it is less optional, since it is ruled by speech practice and not by metrical demands; at least it was my intention that my^c elisions' should be quite natural. I have however extended Milton's elision in one particular, viz., I have considered all the words ending in nation as being now in that condition which must bring them into line with his other semivocalic terminations; they have, that is, in my lines, their speech value = sh'n, which is a truly elidable condition, and can only be forbidden on antiquarian grounds. As Milton and Chaucer would write

the temple and all....

so we may now say

the nation and all... .

There are no doubt a few other semivocalic terminations which have been lightened since Milton's time and are now in the same elidable condition: and if I have sometimes used them they might seem as great an extension of his liberty in liquid elision as nation is. But they are not likely to give the reader any difficulty, or suggest such metrical doubt, as the 'elision of^a(a)tion might.

R.B.

